

Jacksonville (FL) Daily Record

Profile: Adina Alford

- By [Daily Record Staff](#)

- | 12:00 p.m. March 14, 2003

Adina Alford has been the director of the T-U Center for one year.

WHAT DOES THE DIRECTOR DO?

“I am mainly responsible for the booking of events, going out and soliciting events, contracting the events and supervising the day-to-day operations of the building. That could mean anything from cleaning and maintenance to HVAC [heating, ventilation and air conditioning]. I make sure the building’s tenants — the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra and the Cultural Council — have their needs met. Anything from A to Z in this building, I have my hands on.”

HOW DID SHE BREAK INTO THE BUSINESS?

“I lived in Charlotte from 1993-95, working at the Charlotte Coliseum as a part-time receptionist. I got bit by the bug in this industry. Most people in the entertainment venue management industry didn’t go to school. They fell into it by accident. It’s always a unique story.”

EDUCATION

Alford received a degree in physical education, with a concentration in sports business, from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. She went to graduate school at the University of Massachusetts to study sports management.

WHY FOCUS ON SPORTS?

“Even today, there really isn’t a graduate program or even an undergraduate program that specializes in entertainment facility management.”

AFTER LEAVING COLLEGE

“I went back to Charlotte and worked in an amphitheater there. Then I moved to Mobile, Ala. and worked at the Mobile Convention and Civic Center. After that, I moved here in 1997. I worked in this venue until December 1998 when I moved to Dallas. The last place I lived was Dallas. I was at the Reunion Arena, where the Dallas Mavericks and the Dallas Stars played, and then at the American Airline Center.”

HER HOME STATE

Maryland.

WHAT BROUGHT HER TO JACKSONVILLE?

“The opportunity to gain experience with managing entertainment venues. This was a chance to run my own shop. I lived here in 1997 and 1998. I was the event manager [for the T-U Center] when they reopened after renovations, so I was familiar with the operation.”

WHAT DREW HER TO THIS FIELD?

“I’ve worked in entertainment venues since 1993 at convention centers, amphitheaters, performance centers and arenas. I’ve had a little taste of each. This industry is dynamic. You meet lots of people from different walks of life so you get exposed to different events and types of issues that you might not be exposed to in another industry.”

WHAT’S MOST REWARDING?

“Being able to create event experiences for people, for the public, for the Jacksonville community, from start to finish. From talking to the promoter and going over a contract to watching people file in and have fun, I can stand back and say I played an integral part. I feel I’m really contributing to the community and our quality of life. Another thing is that you are exposed to so many people and genres that it prevents you from becoming complacent.”

WHAT CHALLENGES DOES SHE FACE?

“The operations side of the job. I’m a creative person so booking events, bringing different shows to town and working with different people to make it all happen, that is part of creativity. But when I get into the nuts and bolts of making sure the building is running — that the doors work, the boiler has gas, the grass is getting cut — and that the venue is ready for events, that’s most challenging to me because I’m not a mechanical person. That’s where my staff picks up the ball and runs with it. No one position speaks to the success of the organization. We have a great team here.”

AFFILIATIONS

Alford participates in the International Association of Assembly Managers and the Florida Facility Managers. She is on the advisory board for the United Negro College Fund and supports the Lupus Foundation.

IN HER SPARE TIME?

“I dance. I take ballet lessons three times a week. I look forward to it; it’s very therapeutic for me. I like to go to the beach with my dog and read biographies because I like to explore other people’s journeys. It inspires me.” Alford’s favorite television show is “Biography.” She also craves seafood and dishes from PF Chang’s Chinese.

WHERE’S HER HIDEAWAY?

“I like to go to the Blue Ridge Mountains when I can. There’s a place off the Blue Ridge

Parkway, Looking Glass Rock, that I go to to get centered. The colors [of the rock formation] change depending on the season.”

HER PET PEEVE?

“Someone who can’t do what they say they’re going to do when they say they’re going to do it.”

HER MOST MEMORABLE MOMENTS ON THE JOB?

“One of the most memorable events for me was an Eagles concert. It was the inaugural event for that building [Charlotte Coliseum]. I’m not necessarily an Eagles fan but it was a high point in my career when I accomplished something bigger than I had done before. Opening an arena of that size, in that size market and creating a whole department, it all came together that day.”

WHO’S HER HERO?

“My mentor, ‘Sporty’ Jeralds, who is manager of the Charlotte Coliseum. He took me under his wing. He is still a mentor to me to this day. He explained to me what to do. Every step of the way, every job change, every decision I’ve made career-wise, I’ve always talked to him about it first. He was very instrumental in where I am today.”

— by Monica Chamness